



# **USAF Warfighter Corneal Refractive Surge Program**

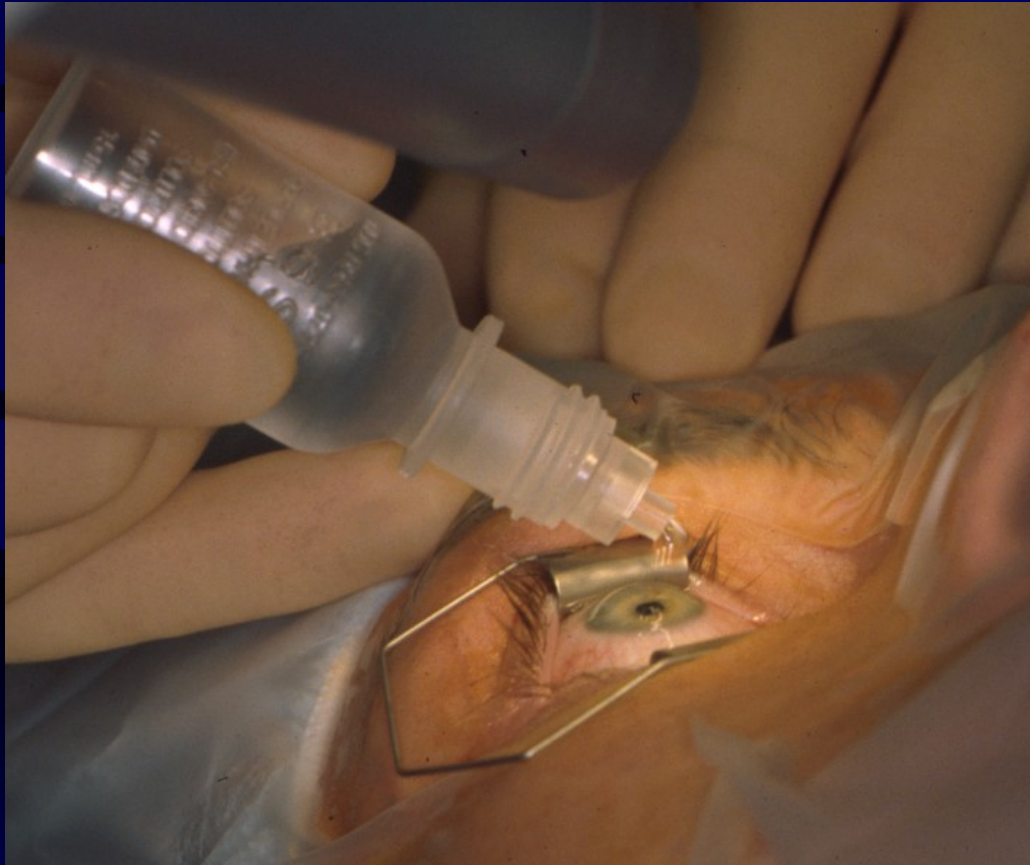
# Overview

- Current USAF refractive surgery policies
- Outline the Optometric role
- Enable you to answer questions from commanders and patients
- Identify your key resources

# Terminology

- CRS = Corneal Refractive Surgery
  - Surface treatment to lessen dependence on spectacles or contact lenses
    - PRK = Photorefractive Keratectomy
    - LASIK = Laser In-Situ Keratomileusis
    - LASEK = Laser In-Situ Epithelial Keratomileusis
    - RK = Radial Keratotomy
    - INTACS = Intra-stromal contact lenses (Rings)
  - ONLY PRK, LASIK AND LASEK ARE AF APPROVED

# Current Policy



# Two AF Policies for CRS at DoD Laser Centers

- Aviation and Special Duty (A/SD) Program, SG Policy #00-005, 2 Aug 2000
  - [http://www.afms.mil/aeromed/USAF\\_PRK.cfm](http://www.afms.mil/aeromed/USAF_PRK.cfm)
- Warfighter (WF) CRS Program, SG Policy # 03-002, 20 Aug 2003
  - <https://www.afms.mil/warfightereyes/>

# Aviation/Special Duty PRK

- PRK ONLY
- Requires permission to proceed from Aeromedical Consult Service at Brooks City-Base
- Application printed from website
  - [http://www.afms.mil/aeromed/USAF\\_PRK.cfm](http://www.afms.mil/aeromed/USAF_PRK.cfm)
- Signed by Commander, coordinated through flight Med and completed by Optometry

# Who are A/SD personnel?

- Quick Check:
  - Maintains AF Form 1042 in section three of the medical record- YES!
- Ask flight medicine to verify duty
- Call Brooks Aeromedical Consult Service (DSN: 240-3241)

# Warfighter Program

- PRK or LASIK approved
- Categorizes personnel into priority groups 2 , 3, and 4
  - Group based on mobility status and visual demands/problems encountered on duty
- Priority is basis for access to laser centers
  - Priority 1 A/SD highest followed by 2- 4



# Prioritization

- Priority 1
  - Aviation and Special Duty personnel
- Priority 2
  - Personnel whose routine military duties require the wear of NVGs, eye protection, or respiratory protection (does not include NBC gear worn only for deployment)
- Priority 3
  - Personnel on mobility status
- Priority 4
  - Personnel who do not meet any of the above criteria

# Warfighter Eligibility

- Available to any Active Duty AF member
  - *Guard and Reserve meet same criteria*
- Must have 6 months retainability from date of surgery
  - *12 months preferred*
  - *Local commanders may declare local retainability requirement greater than 6 months*
  - *Reference document is AFMOA memo, 1 Jul 02, Subject: Clarification of Qualifying Aviators...*

# Non-AF Referrals

- Tri-Service Working Group determines access guidelines DoD-wide
- Check with individual laser centers to determine availability for Army/Navy/Marine/Coast Guard
- Process any DoD member assigned to your MTF for care
- Treatment is Service-specific: members are evaluated and treated according to their service's policies
- Non-AF policies listed at:  
[http://wwwsam.brooks.af.mil/web/consult\\_service/opto\\_sect/prk.htm](http://wwwsam.brooks.af.mil/web/consult_service/opto_sect/prk.htm)

# Optometric Role



# CRS Referral and Treatment Process

- Step 1: Command Authorization
- Step 2: Local screening
- Step 3: Send package to laser center
- Step 4: Laser center contacts patient
- Step 5: Travel/treatment

# Step 1: Command Authorization

- Attachment 6 from SG Policy # 03-002
- Must be signed by squadron commander or above
- Commander must be on G-series orders
  - Commander cannot delegate that authority
  - Deputy commander cannot sign if not on G-series orders
  - Squadron commander 'equivalent' cannot sign unless on G-series orders

# Step 2: Local Screening

- Examination by OD or Ophthalmologist
- Use Application Form – USAF Warfighter Program,  
(<https://www.afms.mil/warfightereyes/>)
  - Topo's: *If unavailable, annotate "N/A"*
  - K's: *Only one set is recorded on the form, however you are still asked to complete two readings at least one week apart, variance should be 0.50 D maximum*
  - Pupil size: *Measure by whatever method you have available*
  - Pachymetry: *If unavailable, annotate "N/A"*

# Step 2: Local Screening (Cont)

- Clinical criteria FAQ's
- Contact lens wear
  - *D/C 4 weeks prior to baseline eval*
  - *D/C 4 weeks prior to surgery date*
- Excessive pupil enlargement
  - *7.5mm to 8.0mm*
  - *Will vary from surgeon to surgeon, center to center*
  - *Call your center, WHMC=7.5 Travis=8.0*
- For IOP  $> 22$ , measurement should be by Goldmann



# Step 3: Send Package

A COMPLETE PACKAGE contains:

- Commander's Authorization Form: exp 90d
- Warfighter Application Form
  - Ensure patient contact info is complete!
- Color Topography Maps if available

Use address for Laser Center listed at top of Application Form

# Air Force Laser Centers

Lackland AFB, TX {PRK/LASIK}

Pilots/Boomer must be sent to Lackland AFB

Air Force Academy, CO {PRK/LASIK}

Wright-Patterson AFB, OH {PRK}

Travis AFB, CA {PRK}

Keesler AFB, MI {PRK}

Europe: Landstuhl Army Medical Center {PRK/LASIK}

# Step 4: Laser Center Contacts Patient

- All AF Laser Centers have waiting lists for surgery
  - Most non-local patients will wait approximately 6-8 months depending on their priority
- Counsel your patients to remain in contact with the Center (it is not your clinic's job!)
- Encourage patients to inform your clinic when scheduled for surgery and make the 1 month F/U appointment before they leave

# Step 5: Travel/Treatment

- Travel:
- Warfighters travel to Laser Center, 3 ways:
  - 1) Ordinary Leave
  - 2) Unit funded TDY orders
  - 3) Commander approved permissive TDY
- Aviation/SD MUST travel on UNIT FUNDED TDY orders

# Step 5: Travel/Treatment (Cont)

- Treatment:
- Member at Laser Center 1 week on Con-Leave
- Released to local optometric care following re-epithelialization
  - First local follow-up is due at 1-month post-op
  - Policy states 1,2,3,4,6, & 12 mo follow-up; some Centers require less- check with your Center
- Your Clinic has a responsibility to send the F/U data back the the Laser Center

# Info for answers to questions from Commanders and Patients



# Member Responsibilities

- **Obtain Commander's Authorization**
- **Read VISX booklet "Facts you need to know about PRK/LASIK surgery" before surgery**
  - available on the WF website
- **Make all follow-up exams (even if PCS)**
- **Compliance with operational restrictions**
  - Duties, deployments

# Commander Responsibilities

- Grants permission to proceed by signing Attachment 6, Commander's Authorization, SG Policy # 03-002
  - Signature Certifies:
    - member meets requirements for retainability and prioritization
- Authorizes travel mode
  - PTDY, Unit funded TDY, Ordinary Leave
- Compliance with operational restrictions
  - Non-deployable while on steroid eye drops



# Local Eye Clinic Responsibilities

- Brief SQ/CCs on CRS policy
- Initial screening/referral of qualified pt
- Local Follow-up care
- Reporting of Follow-up info to Centers
- Determine “return to duty” clinical criteria met and profile be removed

# Laser Center Responsibilities

- Review referral documentation
- Notify applicant of eligibility and schedule for surgery
- Final pre-op evaluation
- Complete informed consent process
- Treatment and initial follow-up
- Provide quarterly reports to AFMOA

# Air Force Medical Operations Agency (AFMOA) Responsibilities

- Policy updates
- Quarterly reports to HQ USAF / SG
- Quarterly reports to HQ USAF / CC

# Civilian CRS procedures

- Non-A/SD member may pursue CRS off-base unless prohibited by local commander
- Requirements:
  - DoDI 1332.39, para 6.1.6 requires AD member must be counseled by the Health Benefits Advisor at their MTF – inform pt disability benefits may be denied if poor surgical outcome
  - AFI 36-3003, para 14.1.2.1 and 14.2 requires that member must be on ordinary leave
  - AFI 41-210, para 4.5 states that member must notify their MTF within 72 hours of treatment and arrange for civilian facility to send a summary of care to MTF

# Tips for WF Success

- Involve your commander!
  - **Tricare accessibility standards**
  - **Walk-in needs for FSO, PES, DODMERBs**
  - **Accessibility for post-op exams**
    - **six scheduled follow-ups in the first post-op year**
- Informed consent is a process– starts locally
  - **provide applicable web sites, handouts**
- When in doubt, follow policy letter (SG Policy# 03-002)

# Potential impact of Optometric Involvement in WF Program

- Improved image for Eye Clinic
- Increased value of Optometric Services
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Increased job satisfaction
- Justification for staffing, equipment and space



# Key Resources



# Air Force

- Special Assistant for Warfighter CRS to Chief Consultant for Optometry  
***DSN: 554-2010***
- Special Assistant for PRK Registry and Surveillance Program to Chief Consultant for Optometry  
***DSN: 240-4534***
- Chief Consultant for Refractive Surgery  
***DSN: 554-2010***



# Navy/Marine

- Comm: 619-524-5511
- Helpful website:
  - <http://www-nmcp.mar.med.navy.mil/Ophthal/PRKSurgery.asp>

# Army

- DSN: 337-7071
- US Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory, Fort Rucker, AL
- DSN: 558-6876
- Helpful website:
- [http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/doem/vision/Army/RF\\_surgery.asp](http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/doem/vision/Army/RF_surgery.asp)

# Websites (AF)

- **AFMOA Webpage**
  - **<https://www.afms.mil/aeromed/links.cfm>**
- **AF Optometry Homepage**
  - **Refractive Surgery**
- **Warfighter website**
- **A/SD website**